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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Letter dated 27 May 1994 from the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions of my Government, I am writing to you concerning the appeal of the Albanian intellectuals addressed to you, circulated as a document of the General Assembly on 9 May 1994 (A/49/153).

The letter of the Permanent Representative of Albania and its annex are yet another act of flagrant interference in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which well illustrates Albania's open support to the request for the secession of Kosovo and Metohija from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Moreover, it is a telling proof that the Permanent Mission of Albania has again abused the United Nations to promote its overt territorial aspirations.

By supporting the request of a group of Albanian intellectuals, many of whom are citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Albania has once again assumed the role of "protector" of Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija and promoted their "Greater Albania" claims towards the parts of the territories of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In doing so, Albania is encouraging forceful changes of the existing borders, thus seriously threatening peace and stability in the Balkans.

At a time when the entire international community is engaged in constructive efforts aimed at ending the civil war in the former Bosnia and Herzegovina and finding a peaceful solution to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, Albania supports "the opening of the Albanian dossier". By using a group of intellectuals to achieve its long-sought strategic goal - secession of

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Kosovo and Metohija and its annexation to Albania - Albania seeks to internationalize the so-called Albanian national question in order to achieve those ends. Since this implies the violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its neighbour States, Albania openly demonstrates that it does not honour the internationally recognized borders and that it is pursuing a dangerous policy of destabilization of the entire region.

Kosovo and Metohija, as an autonomous province in the Republic of Serbia, is an integral part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Therefore, the allegations in the appeal that Serbia has occupied a part of its own territory are malicious and totally absurd. As a national minority in the Republic of Serbia (17.2 per cent of the population), the rights enjoyed by Albanians by far exceed the standards provided for by international instruments in this area. The autonomy granted to the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. However, under the pressure of their separatist political mentors, the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija consistently defy the legal authorities of the country they live in by intentionally refusing to exercise their rights in an attempt to legitimize secession and gain independence of the illegal, unconstitutionally proclaimed so-called Republic of Kosovo. Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Albanian separatists in Kosovo and Metohija, has recently stated that he is not interested in a dialogue with the authorities of the Republic of Serbia on the autonomy of Kosovo and Metohija. Evidently, it is not the failure of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to respect the human and minority rights of the Albanians that is the root cause of the problem in Kosovo and Metohija, but secessionist aspirations pursued by certain political leaders of the Albanian minority, supported and encouraged by the Republic of Albania, even at a cost of provoking a broader conflict.

Although the Albanian national minority enjoys all rights in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Serb and Montenegrin minority in Albania has been deprived of all rights. Albania's "solemn obligation" to respect the rights of national minorities is arrant hypocrisy. It is widely known that Albania's problems with Greece are caused exactly by its denial of the rights of the numerous Greek minority.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has warned the United Nations on many occasions that Albania is pursuing a dangerous policy of encouraging illegal secession, in contravention of the principle of inviolability of borders, which can have serious consequences. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considers that, instead of lending an ear to the unfounded protestations of the Albanian Mission, which constitute a flagrant interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the United Nations and its Secretary-General should call on Albania to settle all its disputes with its neighbours through a dialogue.

Pursuant to its policy of peace and promotion of good-neighbourly relations, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia stands ready to engage in such a dialogue with Albania to resolve all misunderstandings in the interest of peace and stability in the entire Balkan region.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 104 (c) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.